


AKIRA 4™



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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 4

KING OF CLOWNS

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo**, plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city," where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell.

Kaneda and his friends, teenage delinquents, make an unauthorized motorcycle run to check out the old site. They encounter a terrified child, known only as **Number 26**, possessing extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of **Kaneda's** close friends. Then, he vanishes.

Kaneda's gang find themselves in trouble following the incident. They learn that the "police" they met following the accident were actually part of some secret concern. Moreover, **Tetsuo**, who they believed had been taken to a hospital, has disappeared.

The next night, at **Harukiya**, a tough local dive, **Kaneda** attempts, unsuccessfully, to pick up a newcomer, **Kay**. In fact, she and her companion, **Ryu**, are part of an underground resistance group dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

Trouble ensues and both delinquents and resistance fighters again encounter **Number 26**. Again, he uses his powers to catastrophic effect. Both groups are scattered, but

Ryu and **Kaneda** re-encounter **Number 26**. **Ryu** attempts to reassure the paranormal boy, but **Kaneda** is anxious to punish him for injuring **Tetsuo**. As they argue, the mysterious soldiers pursuing **Number 26** reach the scene. A firefight results.

Kaneda is separated from **Ryu** and **Number 26**, whom the soldiers are determined to recapture alive. **Kay** saves **Kaneda's** life, but **Ryu** and **Number 26** are cornered. The paranormal boy becomes increasingly ill, exhibiting symptoms of drug withdrawal. **Kaneda** returns the favor he owes the resistance fighters by stealing a truck and heading back to save **Ryu** and **Number 26**.

That is when the ominous **Colonel** in charge of the covert operation appears with a secret weapon—**Number 27**, a crippled paranormal child named **Masaru**.

Masaru astonishes the resistance fighters by addressing **Number 26** as **Takashi**. **Kay** and **Ryu** had assumed that **Number 26** was the Colonel's ultimate weapon—the as-yet unseen paranormal giant code-named **Akira**.





Kaneda provokes a crisis by pretending to threaten **Takashi**. He responds with telekinetic upheavals. **Kaneda** is again separated from the resistance fighters, but he manages to intercept and hide a pill meant for **Takashi**, who is recaptured by the Colonel's men.

The next day, **Tetsuo** reappears in school, seemingly all right. However, during **Tetsuo's** treatment, the **Colonel** has learned the delinquent shows great psychic potential and would be a valuable asset.

Kaneda has a girl friend in the school infirmary analyze the drug intended for **Takashi**. It is similar in substance to stuff **Kaneda** and his friends take, but unbelievably concentrated and powerful.

Eager for action, **Kaneda**, **Tetsuo**, and their gang head out for a rumble with their chief rivals—the vicious **Clown** gang.

One of the **Clowns** corners **Tetsuo**. **Kaneda** and his group come to the rescue. **Tetsuo** astonishes them, first by displaying uncharacteristic bloodthirstiness, and then by challenging **Kaneda's** authority.

Determined not to let a potential human weapon escape

him, the **Colonel** goes to the school the next day. Collecting **Tetsuo** there, he also encounters **Kaneda** and almost captures him.

Under treatments of the Colonel's chief medical officer, **Tetsuo** begins to exhibit powerful psychic abilities...and to undergo great pain.

Meanwhile, **Kaneda**, trying to spy on the **Colonel** and learn what is happening to **Tetsuo**, re-encounters the members of the resistance, and is brought back to their headquarters. He is questioned by **Ryu** about the stolen drug. When he denies knowledge of it, **Kaneda** is put under Kay's personal surveillance...to her immense dismay.

Kiyoko, another of the psychic children under the Colonel's control, warns her master that **Akira**—who is asleep and expected to remain so for some time—will awaken soon. The **Colonel** views this as disastrous. Meanwhile, at the resistance hideout, **Kaneda** encounters a ghost-like apparition of himself in flames, shouting a name...**Akira**.

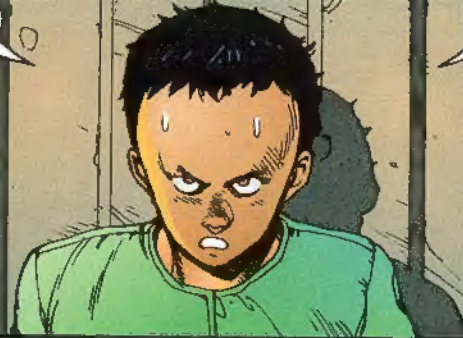
The Colonel's spies learn where the resistance is centered, and soldiers enter the hideout in force, scattering the rebels. **Kaneda** and **Kay** escape together. They flee to **Harukiya**, where the bartender agrees to shelter them.

Overwhelmed by pain, and by the burgeoning powers within him, **Tetsuo** breaks out of the Colonel's installation, leaving death in his wake.

Finally, he is cornered alone in the street...by the **Clown** gang.

STOP
IT!!

MY HEAD IS
SPLITTING...



NAW...
IT
ISN'T
SPLITTING
YET
...



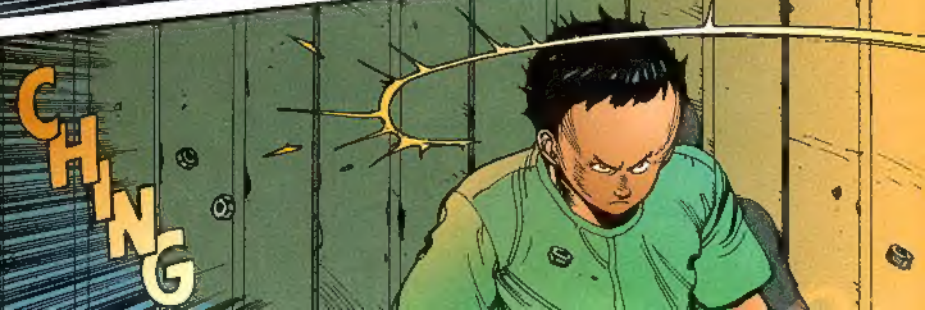
... BUT IT'S
GONNA
BE!!

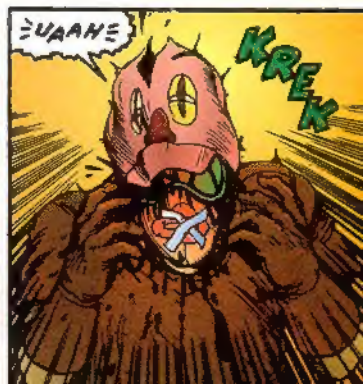
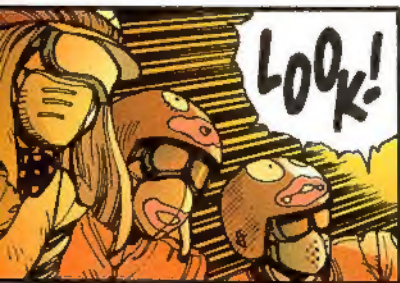
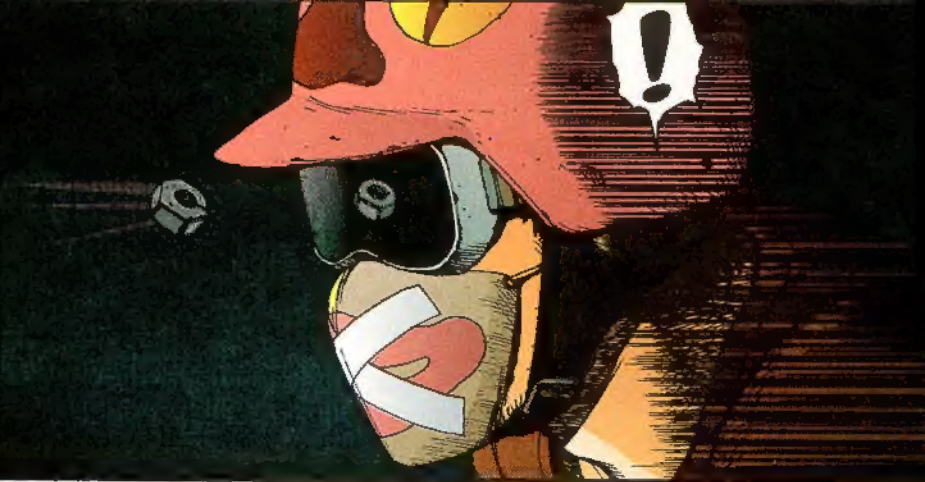


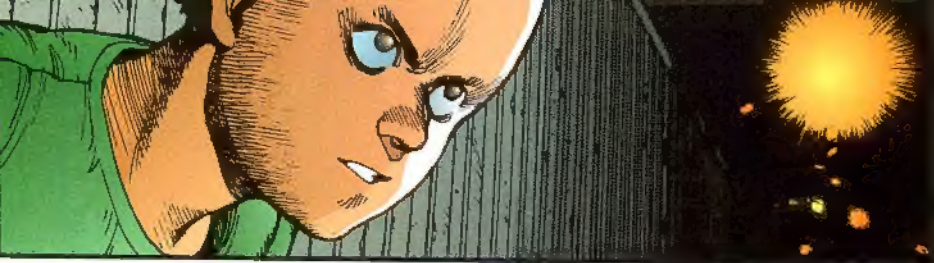
SWOOSH

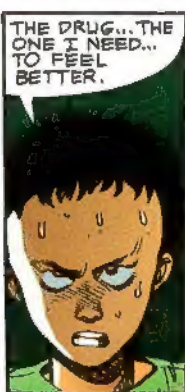
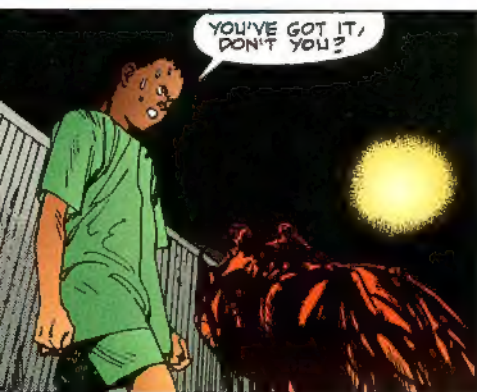


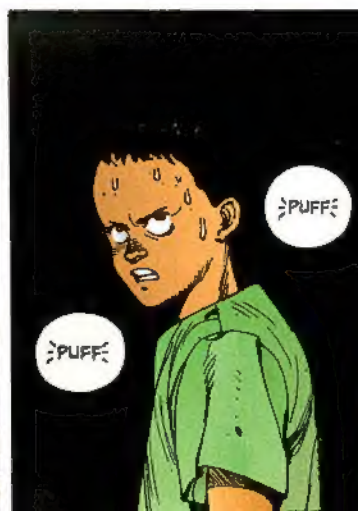
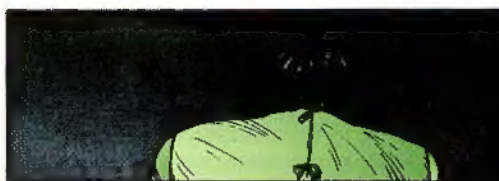
CHING

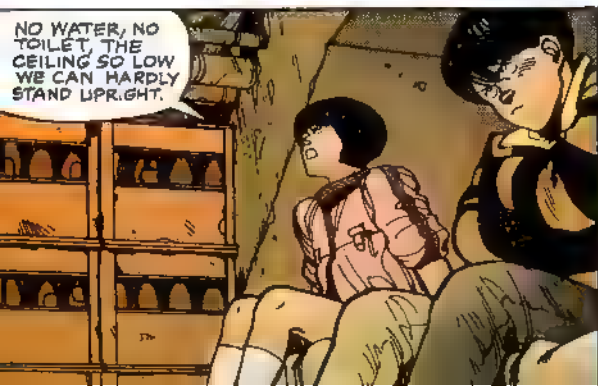
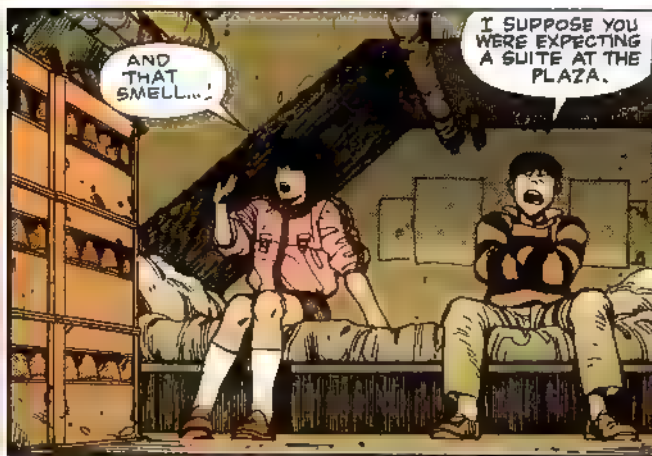














SO, WHAT'S THE STORY ON THAT RYU GUY, ANYWAY?



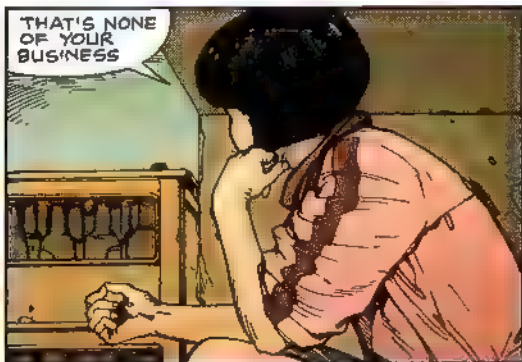
WHAT'S HE TO YOU?



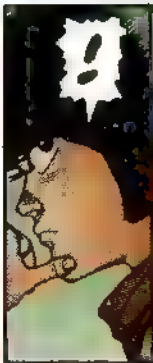
HE'S MY BROTHER.



BUT HE DOESN'T LOOK ANYTHING LIKE YOU



THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS



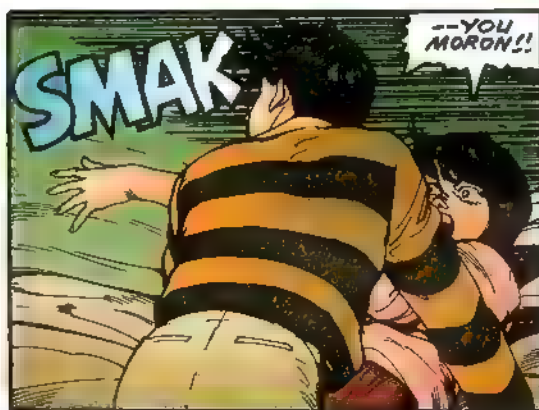
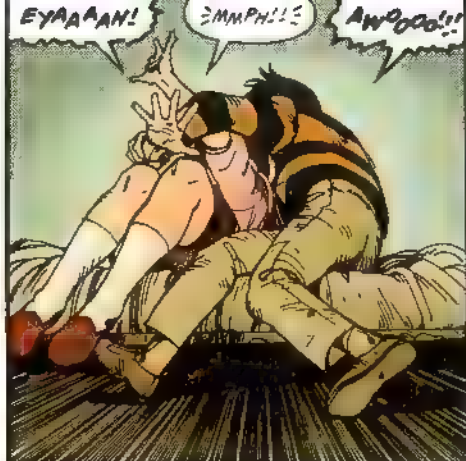
OH, BUT IT IS, IF ONLY YOU KNEW THE THINGS I'D IMAGINED.

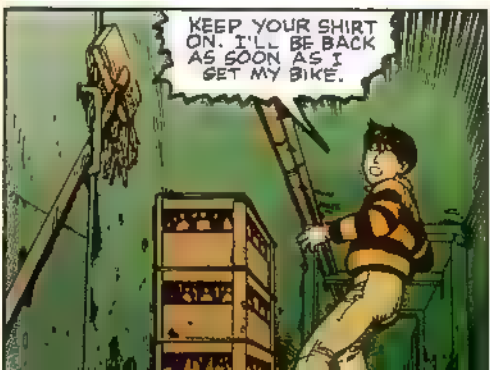


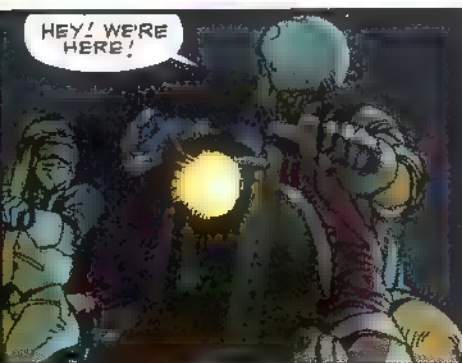
MOVE THAT HAND OR LOSE IT.



YOU DON'T MEAN THAT.







HEY! WE'RE
HERE!



I SAID..



SHUT UP!
IT MAKES
MY HEAD
HURT
WHEN
YOU TALK.

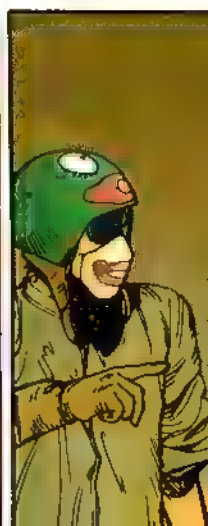


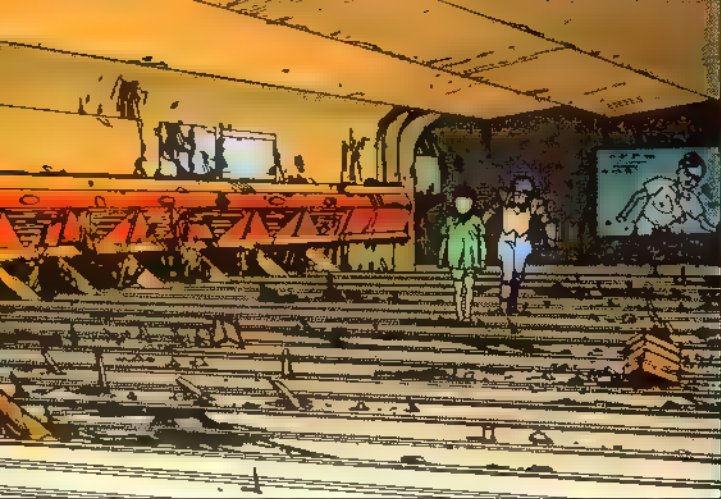
WHAT'S
JOKER
GONNA
SAY ABOUT
IT?

HOW
SHOULD I
KNOW?

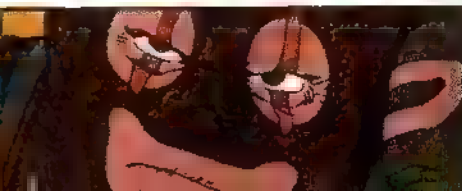
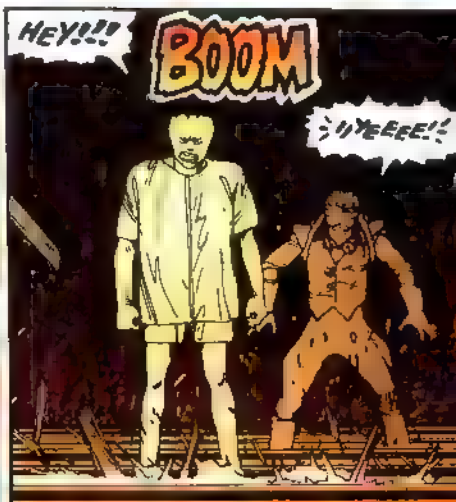
IS HE
NUTS
BRINGING
THAT
WEIRDO
HERE?

CAREFUL,
DON'T
TRIP
IN THE
DARK.

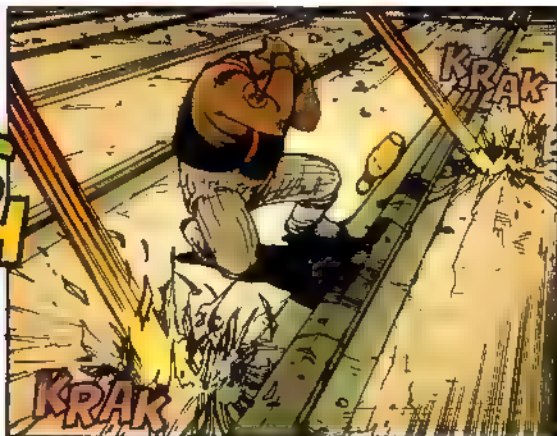
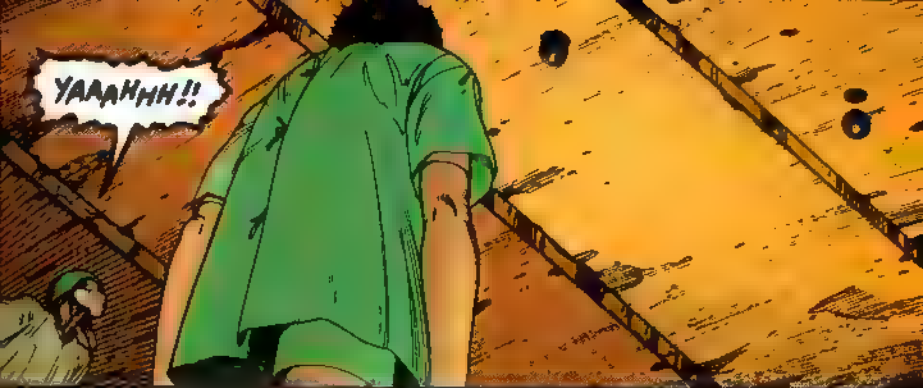




ARE YOU
GONNA KEEP
ME HERE ALL
NIGHT?!







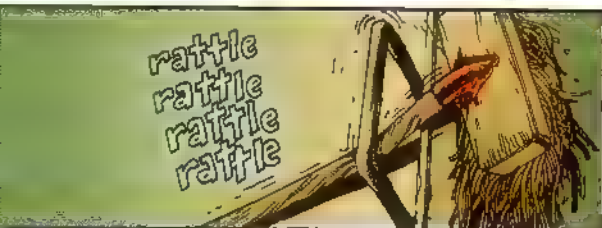


IT'S GOTTA BE
AROUND HERE
SOMEWHERE!

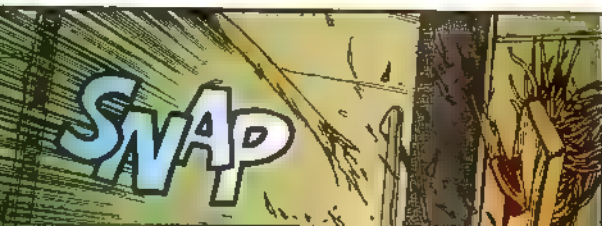


RAT'S
ANOTHER
CROSSWAY!

I'M GOING
UP TO THE
STREET
LEVEL AND
LOOK FOR MY
BIKE THERE.
THAT'LL
TAKE
LESS
TIME.



rattle
rattle
rattle
rattle

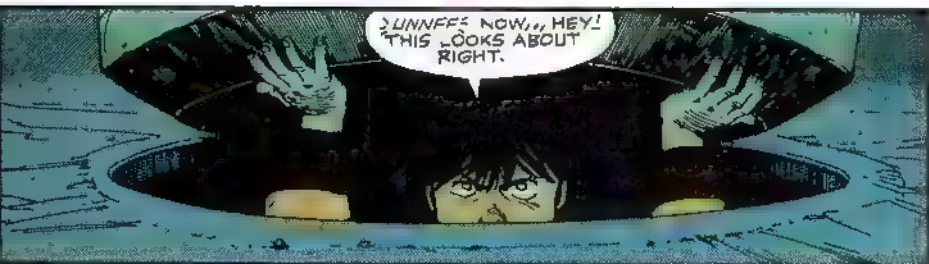
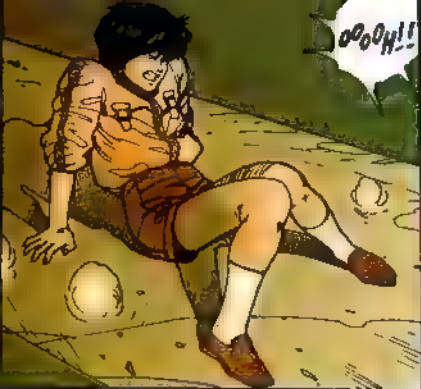


SNAP



WHOA!!

THUD



'CAUSE YOU'RE A JERK! COM'N!



WHAT TH--?
I'M WAY OFF
... THIS IS THE
MIDDLE OF THE OLYMPIC
SITE

THOUGHT
I'D BE
SOMEWHERE
NEAR THE
WEST
GATE.

OH,
WELL...

I
BETTER
KEEP IT
DOWN

THIS PLACE
IS A REAL PAIN
TO GET OUT OF,
AND IT'S
CRAWLING WITH
GUARDS.

AAH... AAH...

CHOOO!

KLONG

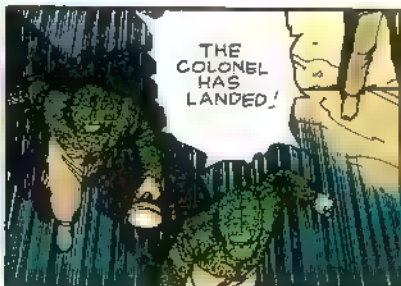


WHAT
WAS
THAT?

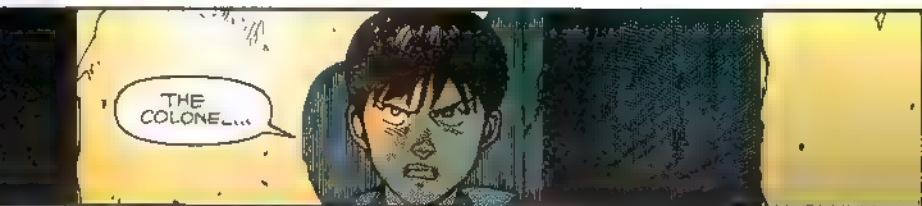
SOUNDED
LIKE IT
CAME FROM
OVER
HERE



BUDDABUDDABUD



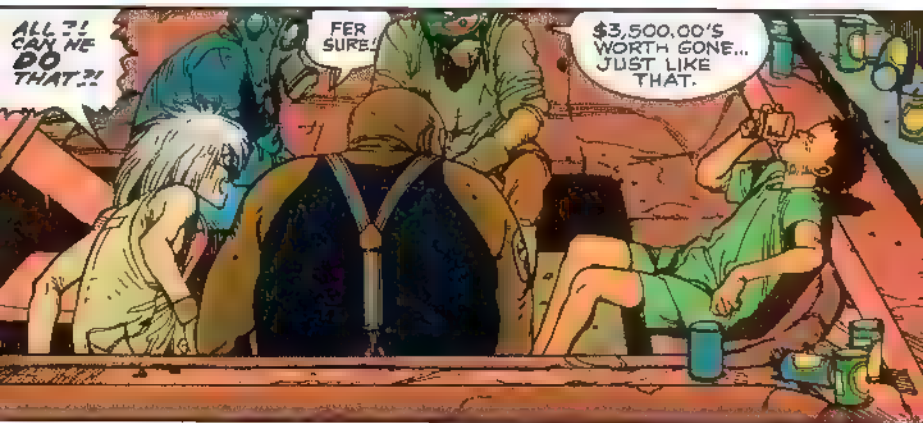
THE
COLONEL
HAS
LANDED!



STF-7



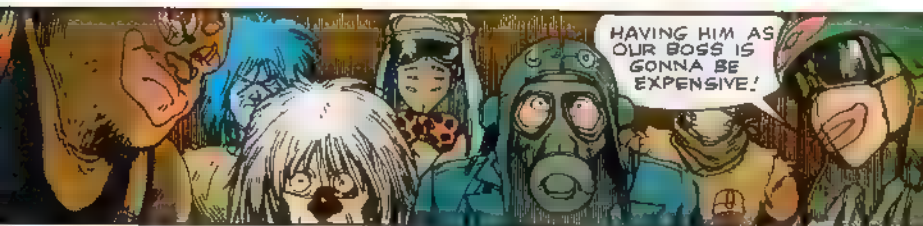
WILL HE BE
ALL RIGHT?
HE'S TAKING
ALL OF
THEM.



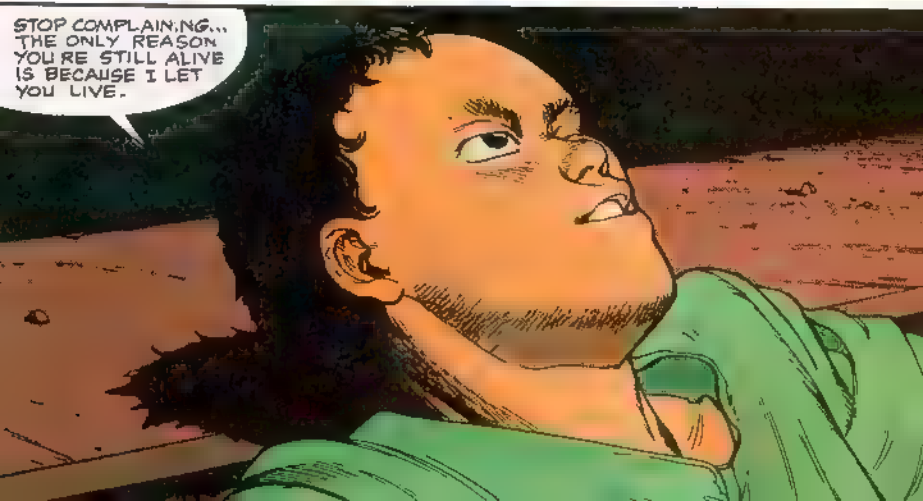
\$3,500.00'S
WORTH GONE...
JUST LIKE
THAT.

FER
SURE!

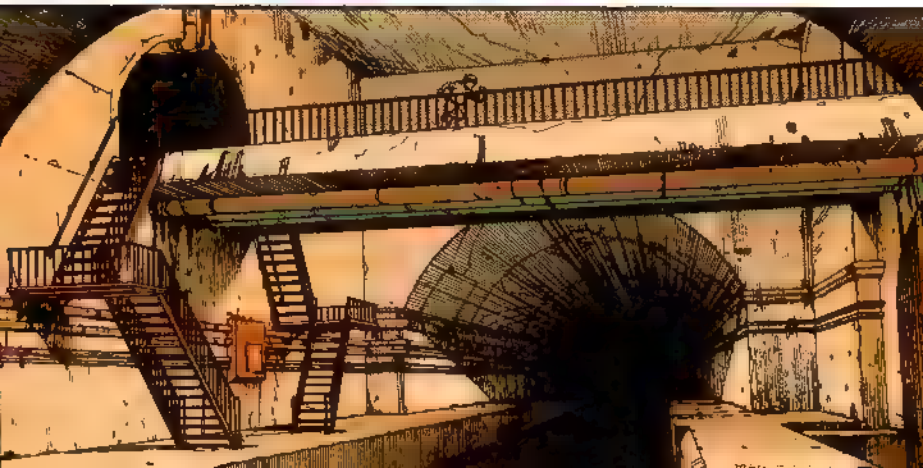
ALL ??
CAN HE
DO
THAT?!

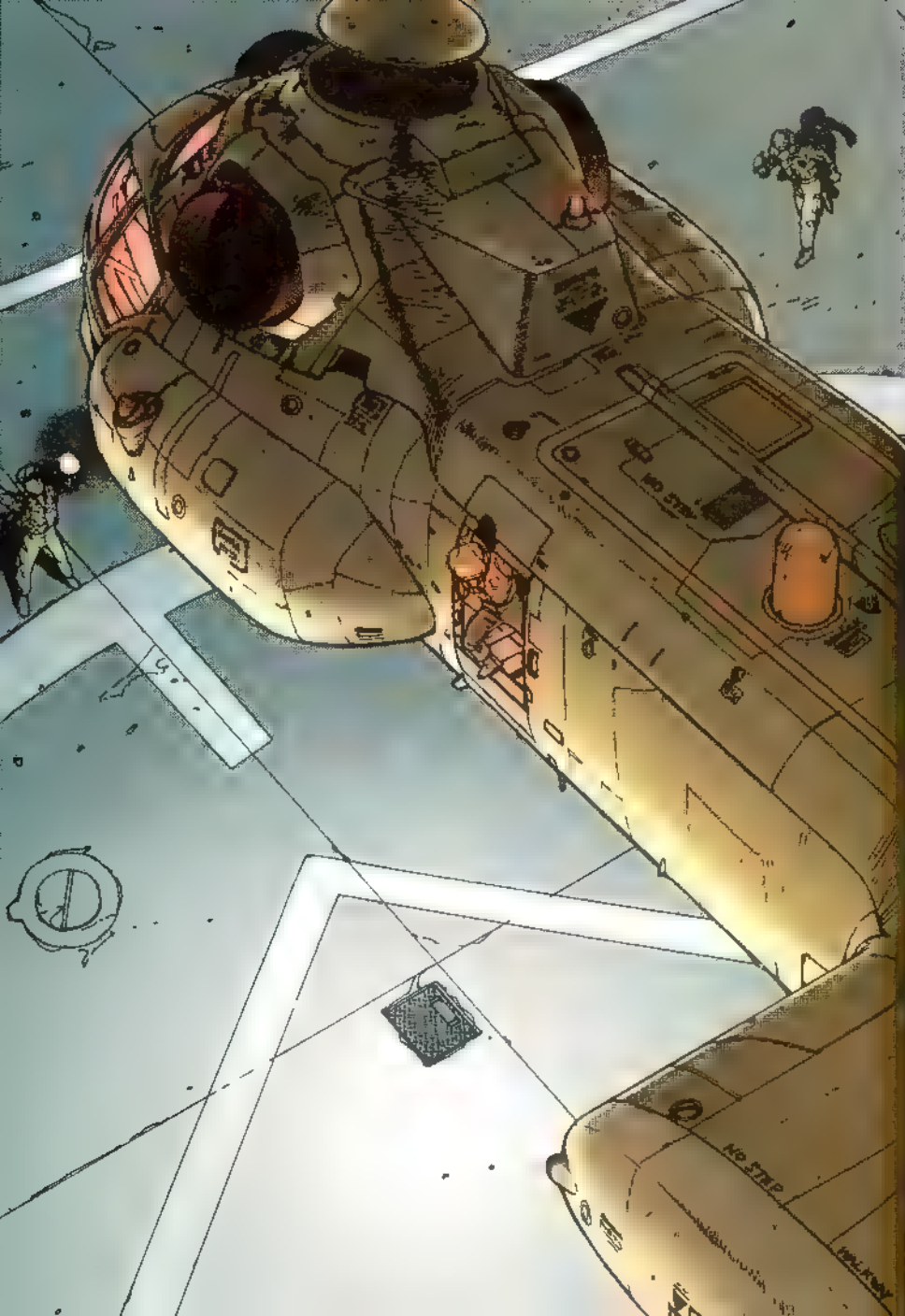


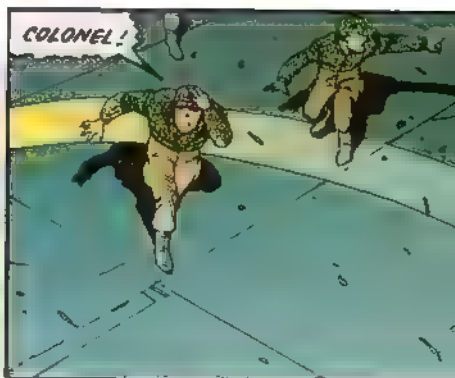
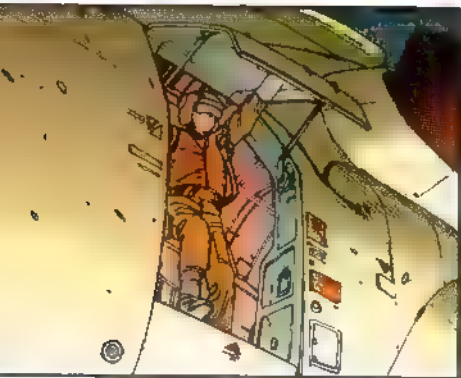
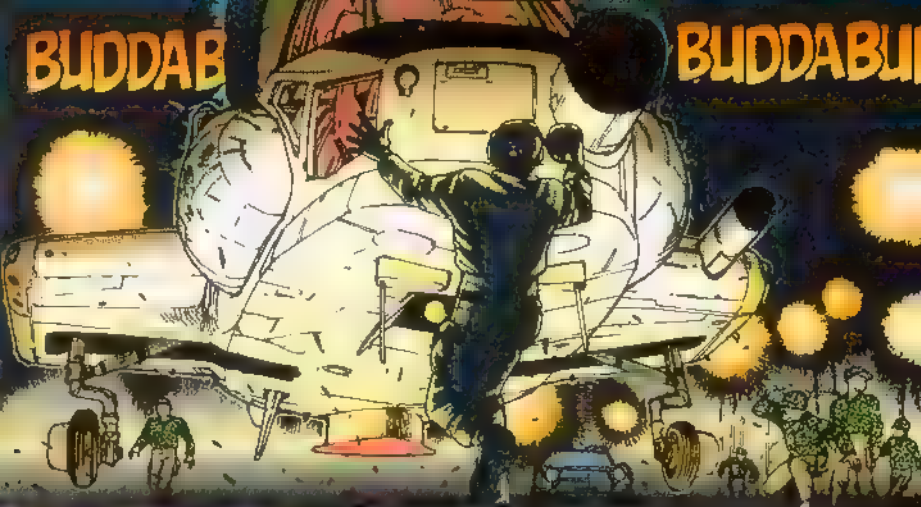
HAVING HIM AS
OUR BOSS IS
GONNA BE
EXPENSIVE!

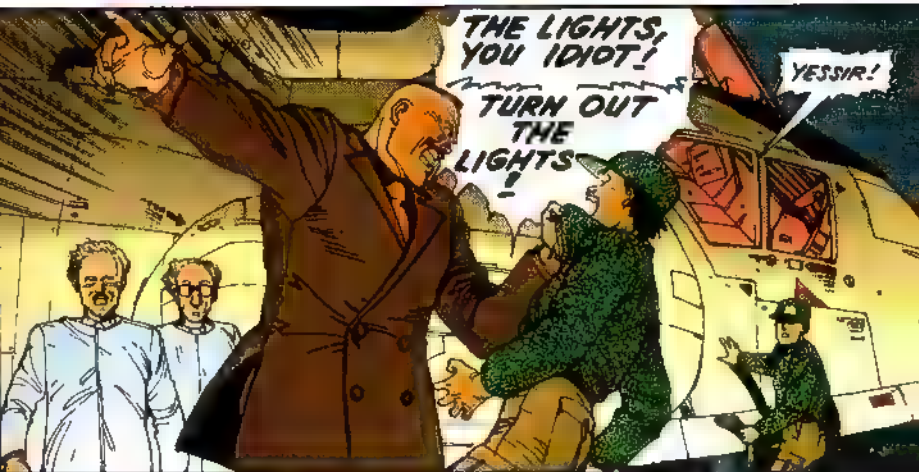


STOP COMPLAINING...
THE ONLY REASON
YOU'RE STILL ALIVE
IS BECAUSE I LET
YOU LIVE.



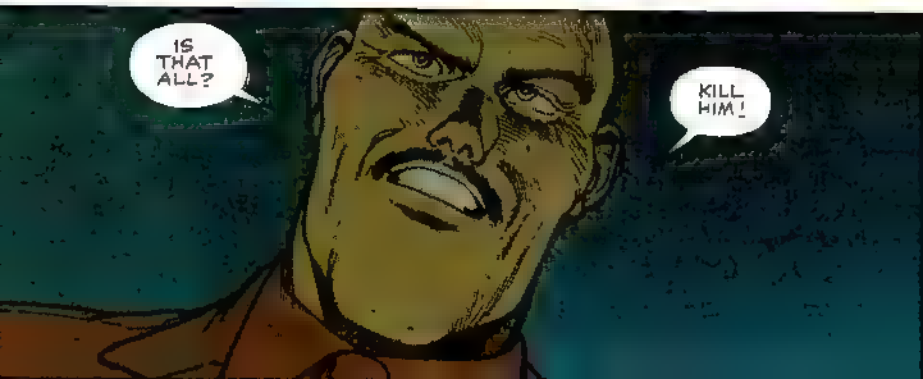
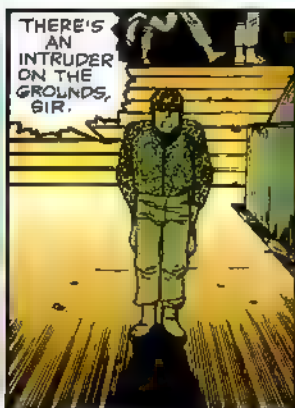
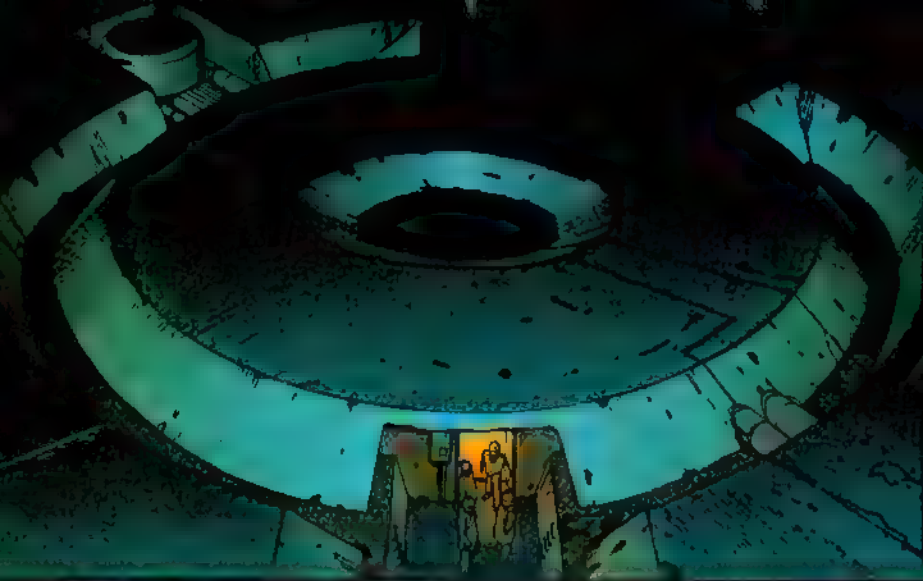








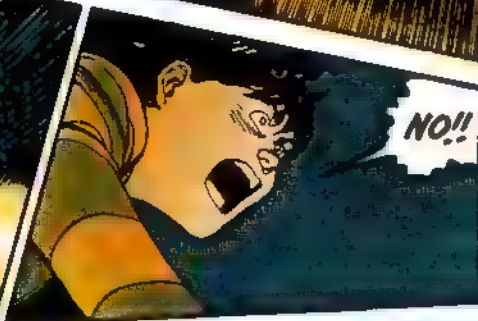




THERE
HE IS!!

STOP
OR
WE'LL
SHOOT!!

Wooooooooo

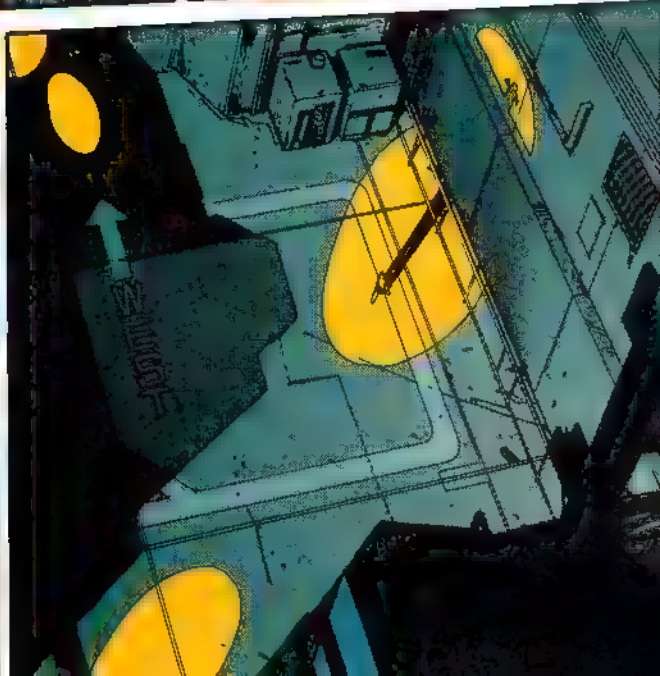


NO!!

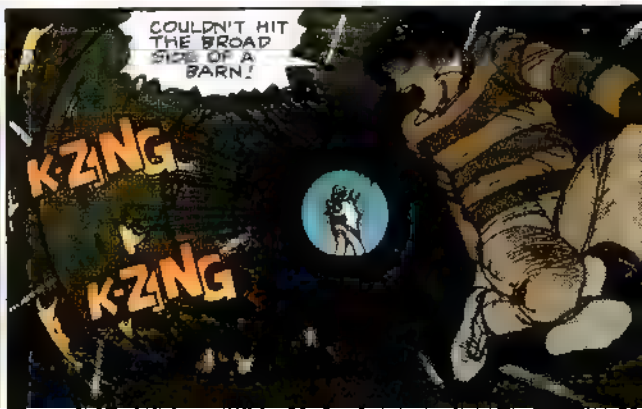
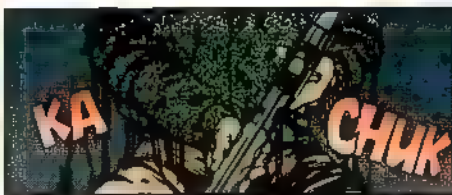


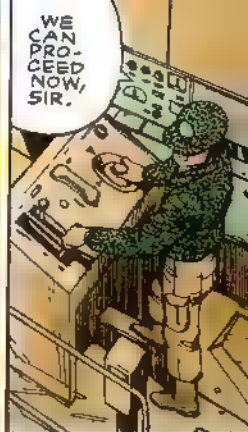
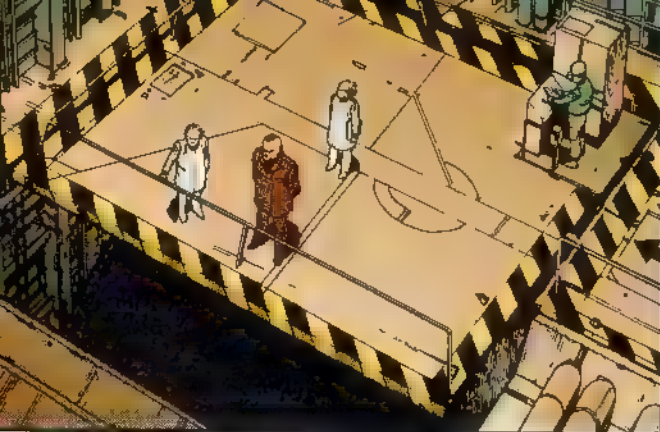
THE
CANAL!!

WE'VE
GOT HIM
TRAPPED!

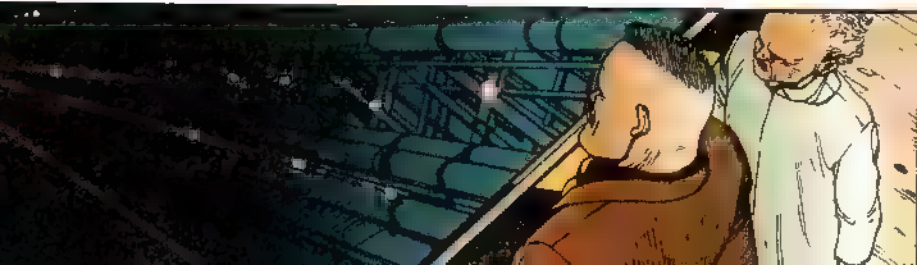
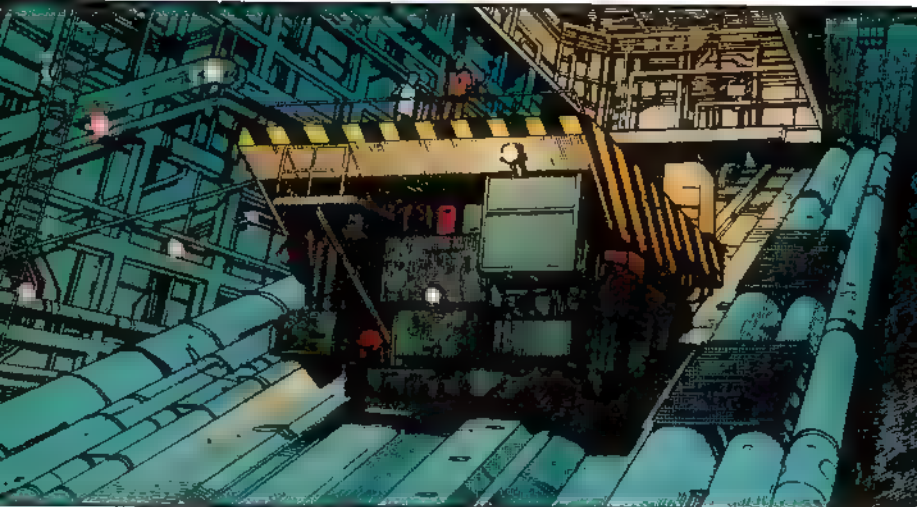








WE
CAN
CEED
NOW,
SIR.



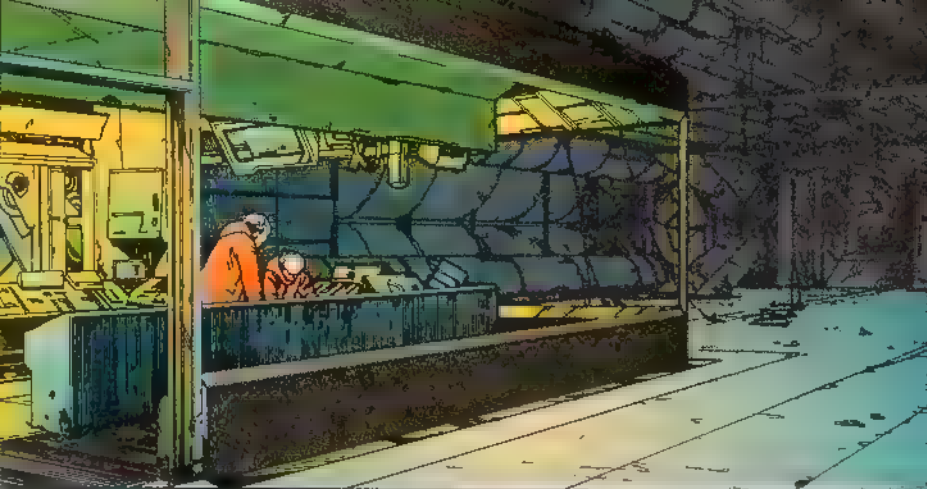
YOU'LL NEED
TO WEAR ONE
OF THESE,
SIR.



COLONEL!

THAT
WAY,
SIR.





LEVEL TEN
IS AT 14.0°
KELVIN. *
LEVEL NINE,
2.18°
KELVIN.

LEVEL SIX,
620° KELVIN.
LEVEL FIVE,
42° KELVIN

LEVEL THREE,
200° KELVIN.
LEVEL TWO,
2° KELVIN.



* 0° KELVIN = -273.15° CENTIGRADE (ALSO KNOWN AS
ABSOLUTE ZERO. 148° KELVIN = -125.15° CENTIGRADE.

LEVEL ONE AT
.005° KELVIN
WHAT ARE THE
READINGS ON
THE DEWAR
WALLS* OF
EACH ROOM?



* DEWAR WALLS-- DOUBLE WALLS
WITH INSULATED SURFACES AND
A VACUUM IN BETWEEN, USED FOR
THE CONTAINMENT OF EXTREME
COLD. INVENTED BY SCOTTISH
PHYSICIST SIR JAMES DEWAR.

IS
EVERYTHING
READING
NORMAL?



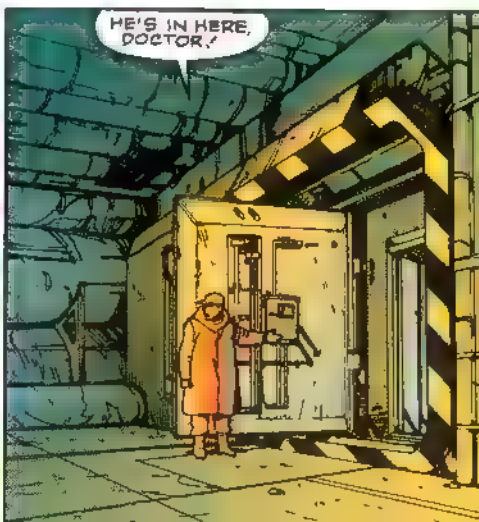
IT'S
PERFECT,
SIR.

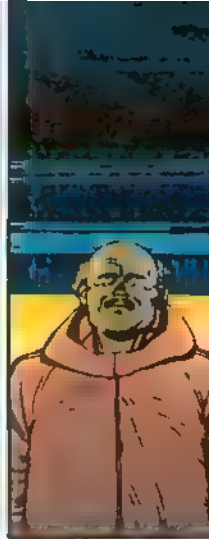
COLONEL?!

COLONEL,
WHERE
ARE YOU?!



HE'S IN HERE,
DOCTOR.!



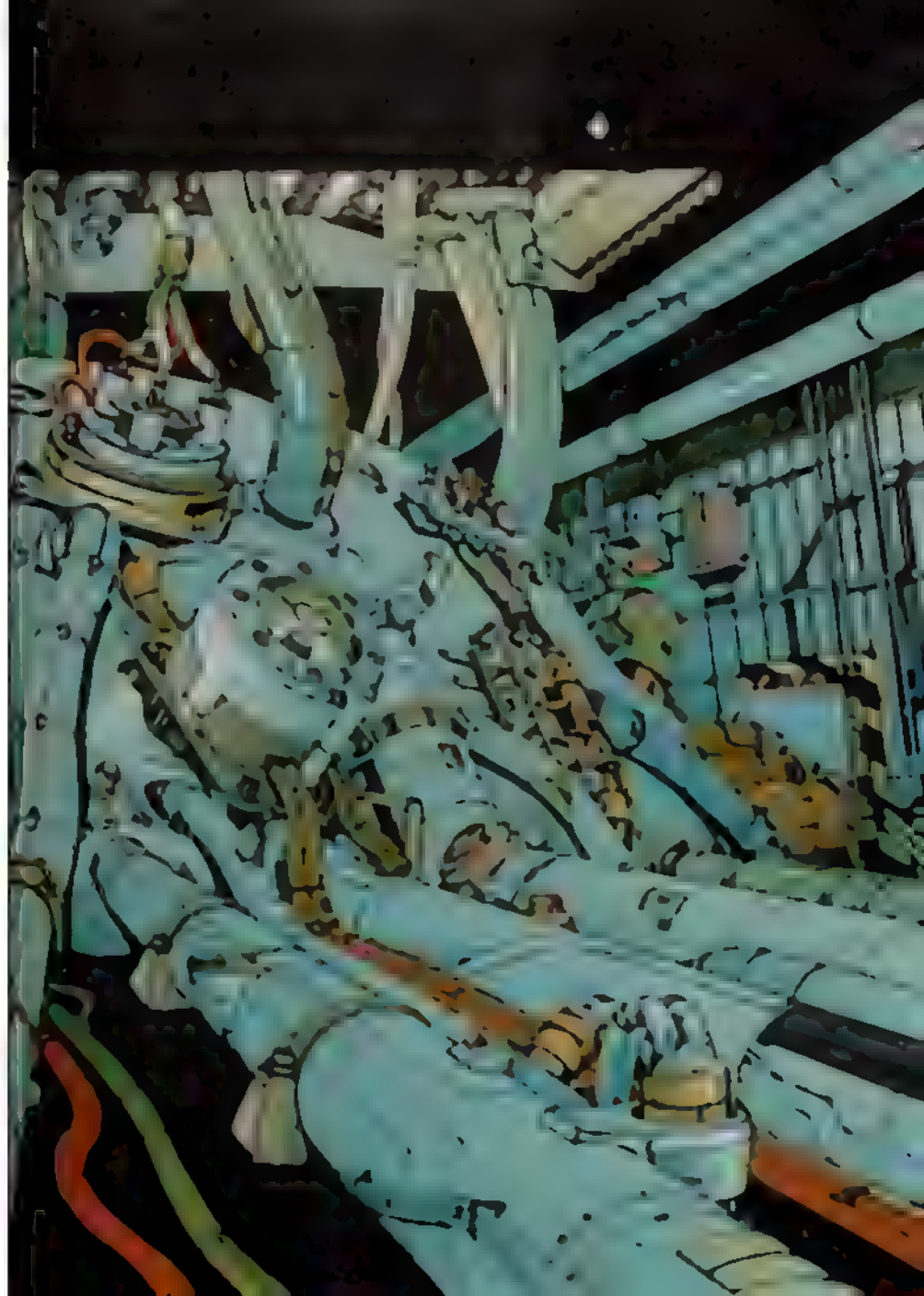


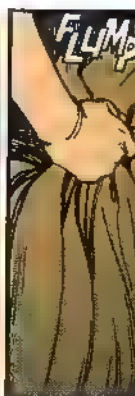
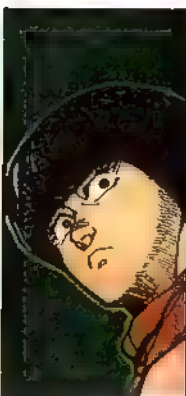
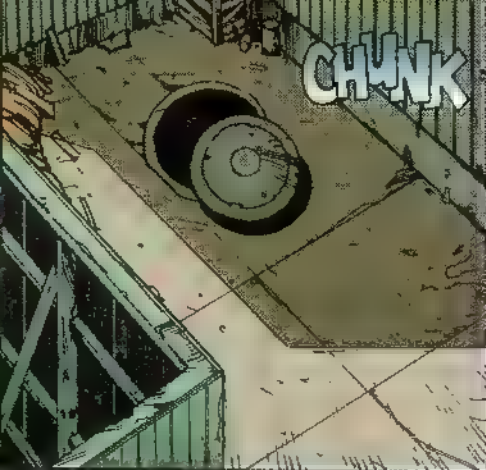
WHAT
A
DISGRACE!
THEY
WERE
AFRAID...
ASHAMED
...

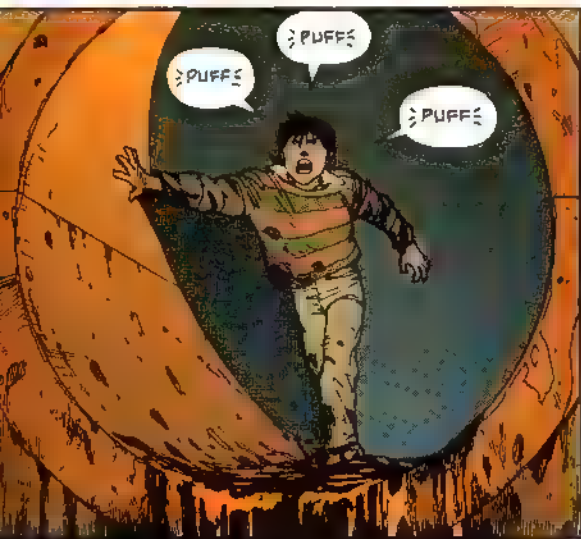
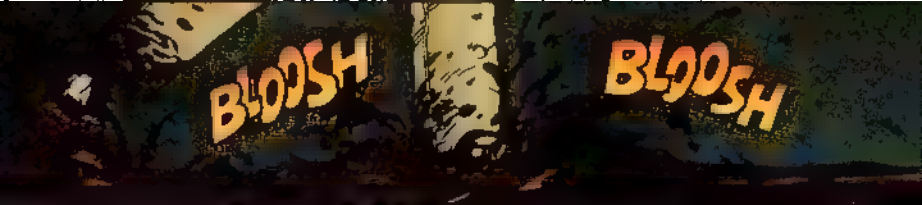
THEY
CHOSE TO
CONCEAL IT...
THEY
BURIED
THE
ROOTS OF
A
GREAT
CIVILIZATION
...



...TURNED THEIR
BACKS ON WHAT
SCIENCE HAD TO
OFFER THEM...







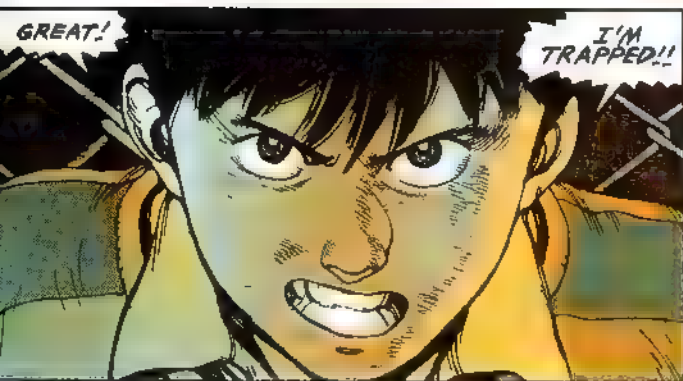


AS SOON AS
WE'VE GOT
THE RAT
CORNERED,
KILL IT!



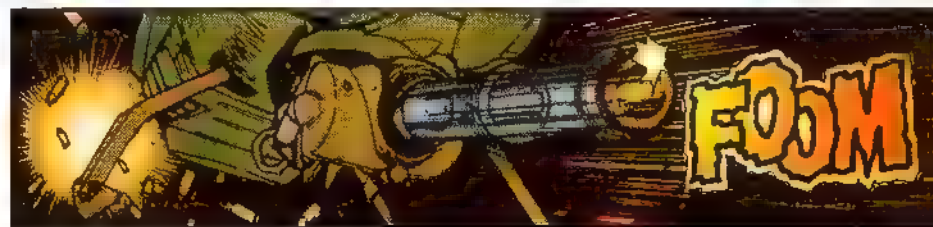
GREAT!

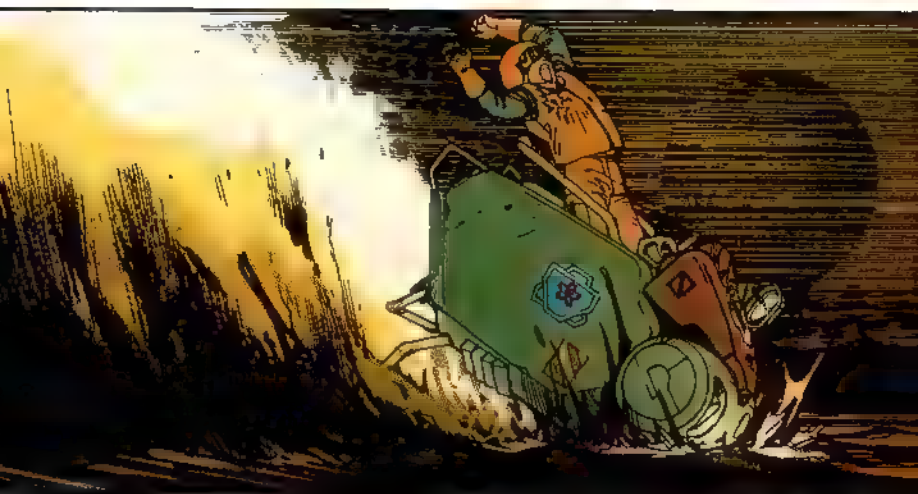
I'M
TRAPPED!!



OKAY,
WISE
GUYS, YOU
ASKED
FOR IT!

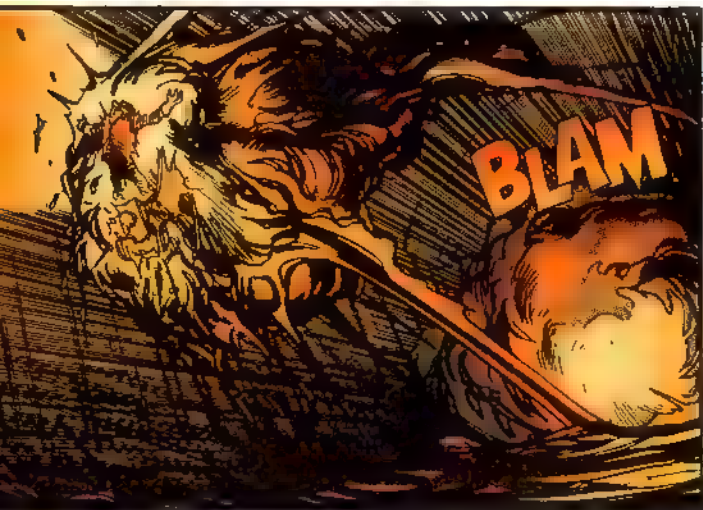




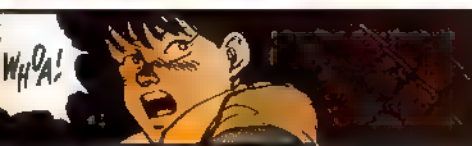


RAASH

FWOOSH



BLAM



WHA!



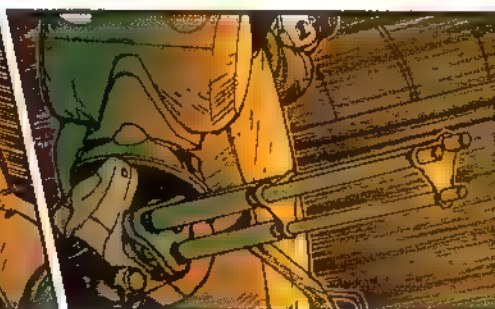
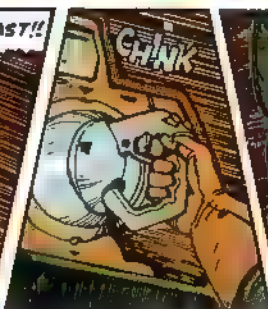
THANK YOU!



FWOOSH

AGGH!

BLOOM



YOU AGAIN?!



THIS HAS
REALLY
BEEN
ONE OF
THOSE
DAYS!



Plish
Plish

YEEEE!!



KATOKATOKATOKATOKATOKATOKATOKA

I GIVE
UP! YOU
WIN!
JEEZUS!



HE-E-ELP!!

I CAN
SEE THE
LIGHT!
I'M
SAVED!!



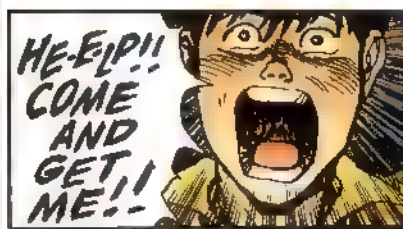
WHO'M I
KIDDING?
NO ONE'S
GONNA
COME!

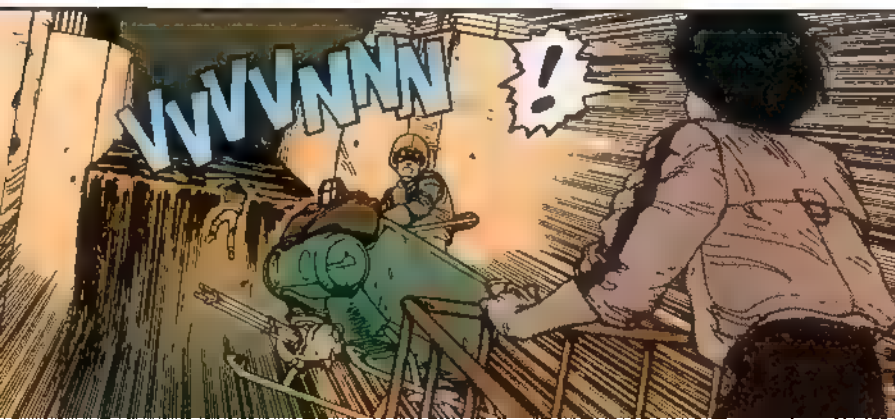


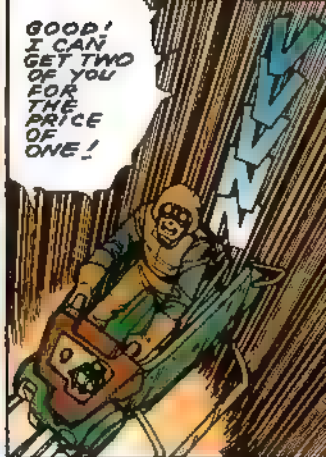
UH...?

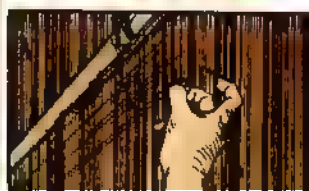
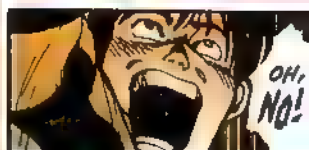
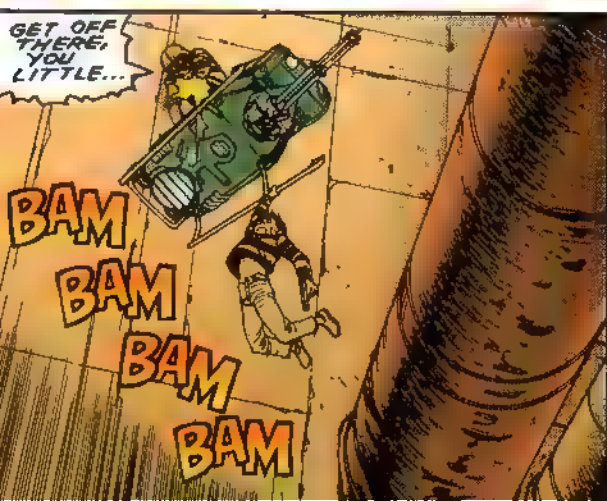
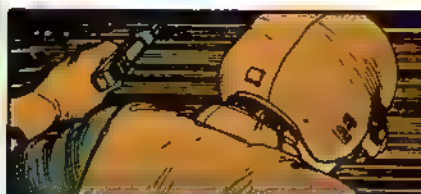
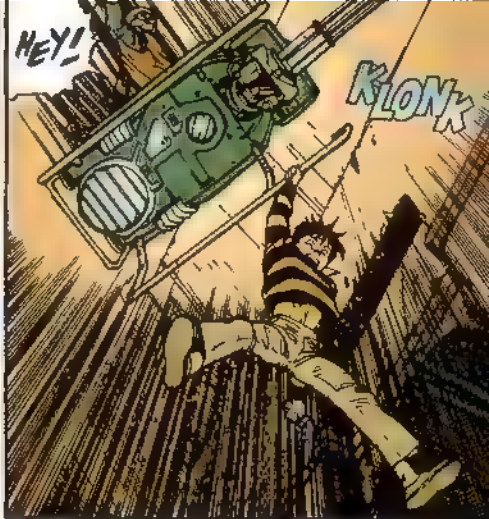


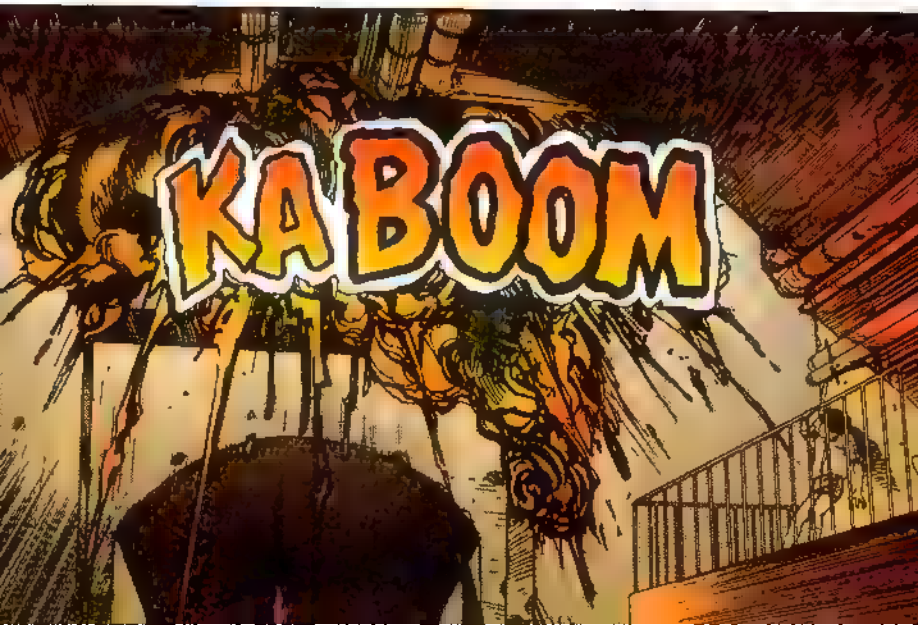














THE INTRUDER
MADE IT INTO
THE SEWERS.
SIR, WE'VE
LOST HIM!

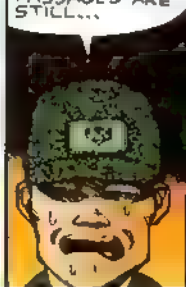
B-BUT,
WE
HOPE
SOON--!



I THOUGHT
IT HAD BEEN
SEALED



THERE...THERE
HAVE BEEN
DELAYS IN
CONSTRUCT ON,
SIR. A FEW
PASSAGES ARE
STILL...



I'M
SORRY,
SIR!

THERE'S
NO
EXCUSE!



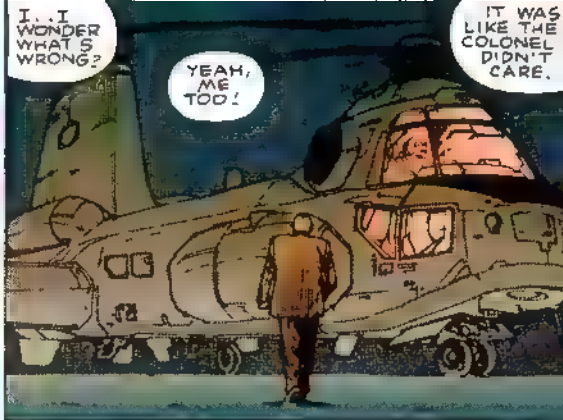
NEVER MIND,
FIND THE
MOUSE AND
EXTERMINATE
IT



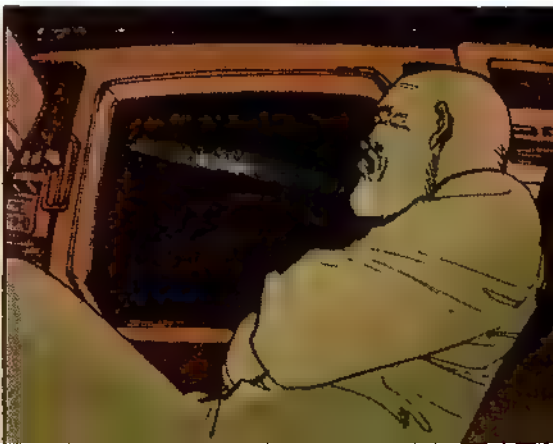
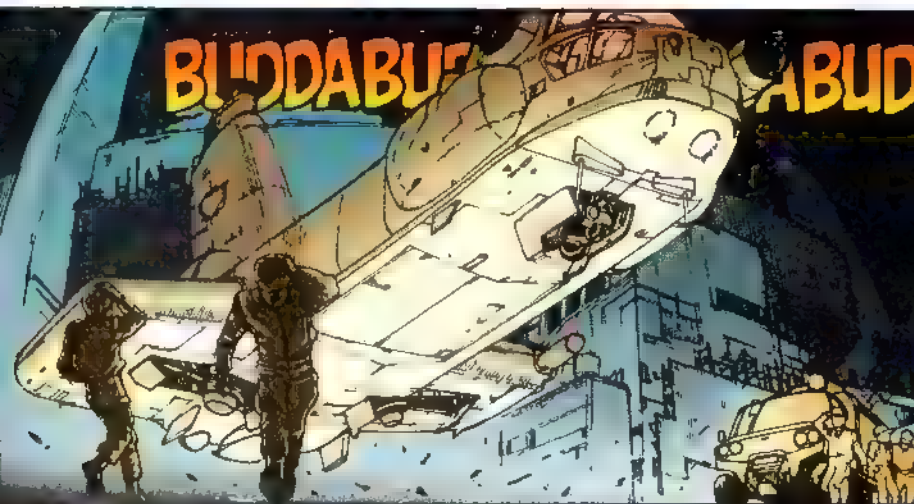
YESSIR!

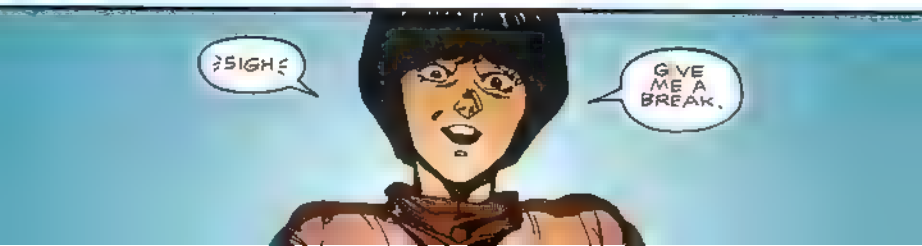


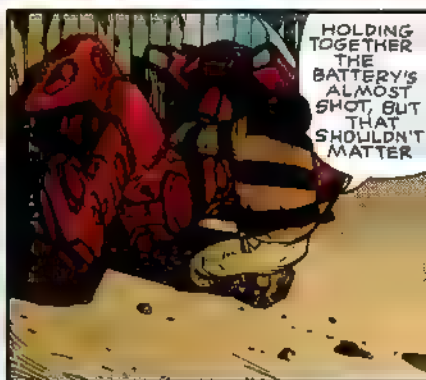
I...I
WONDER
WHAT'S
WRONG?

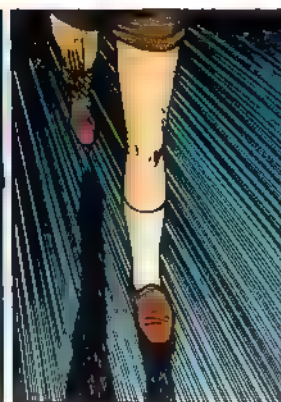
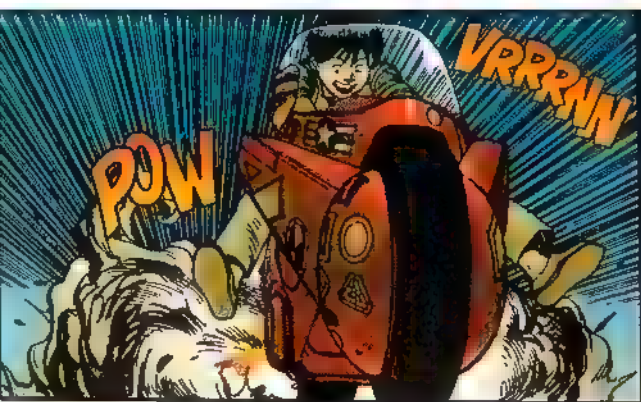


IT WAS
LIKE THE
COLONEL
DIDN'T
CARE.









WE'D BETTER
GET MOVING.



HOLD ON
TIGHT!



YES.

YES, I...

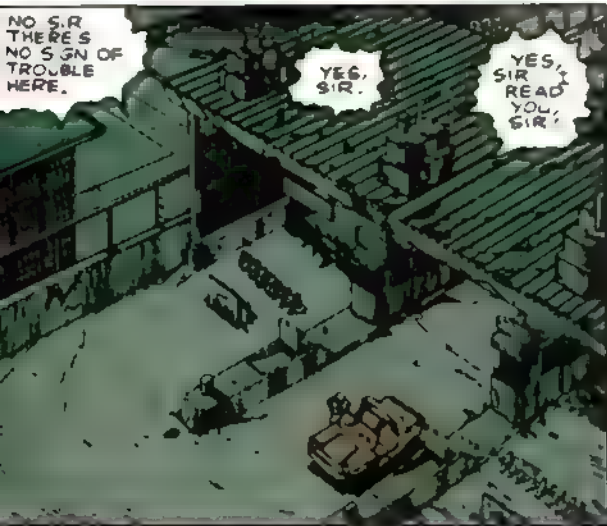
I UNDER-
STAND!

NO SIR
THERE'S
NO SIGN OF
TROUBLE
HERE.

YES,
SIR.

YES,
SIR
READ
YOU,
SIR!

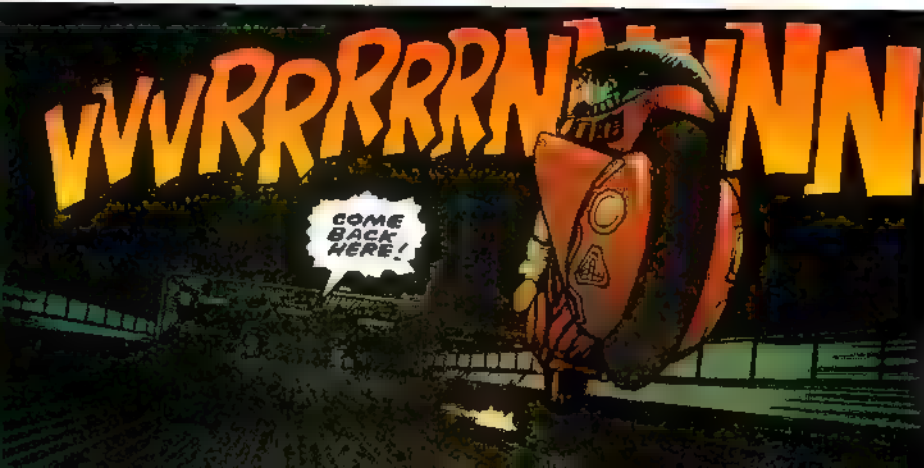
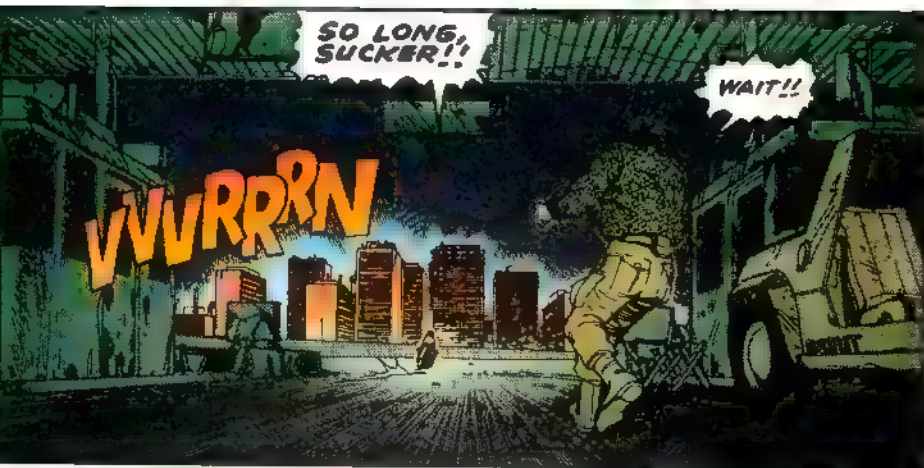
YAA AAWN...
AM I
BEAT!!



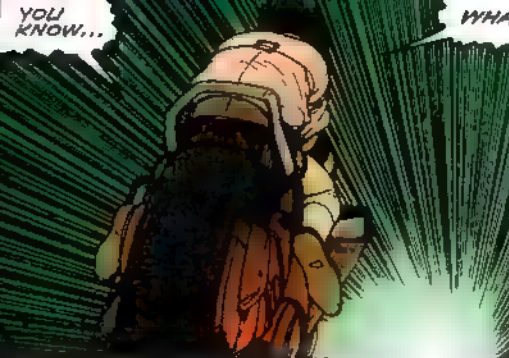
HMM?



WHAT
IN?



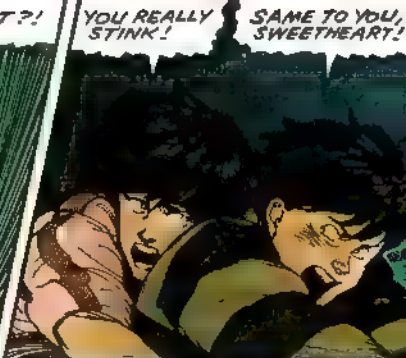
**YOU
KNOW...**



WHAT?!

**YOU REALLY
STINK!**

**SAME TO YOU,
SWEETHEART!**



**WHEN YOU
GET HOME,
TAKE A
BATH!!**



**I HATE
BATHS!!**

**I CAN
TELL!!**



**I KNOW!
LET'S TAKE
ONE
TOGETHER!**



**YOU
JERK!!**

**OW!
KNOCK IT
OFF, OR
WE'LL
HAVE AN
ACCIDENT!**

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

The creator of **Akira** was born in April of 1954 in Japan's Miyagi Prefecture, some 400 kilometers northeast of Tokyo. He grew up there and attended Sanuma High School, whose graduates also include one of Japan's most famous comics creators, **Shotaro Ishinomori**, whose work includes **Cyborg 009** and the current best seller, **Japan Inc.**

In 1973, after graduation, Otomo moved to Tokyo. His goal was to become a comics artist and in August of that year he achieved it with his first published work, **Mateo Falcone**, an adaptation of the short novel by **Prosper Mérimée**.

Over the next few years, Otomo's reputation grew based upon a large number of short stories (twenty to thirty pages) which appeared most regularly in **Action** magazine. Later these works would be collected in book format, beginning with **Short Piece** in 1979 and followed by **Highway Star** (October 1979), **Good Weather** (March 1981), and **Boogie Woogie Waltz** (May 1982).

After success with the short story form, Otomo turned to the longer saga-style more commonly associated with Japanese comics. **Fireball**, a human versus mega-computer story, appeared in a limited circulation magazine in 1979. Though still uncompleted, it marked the beginning of Otomo's interest in the science-fiction action genre and is a natural forerunner to his most acclaimed works, **Domu** and **Akira**.

Domu, a 230 page graphic novel centering on a conflict

between two individuals possessing deadly psychic powers, began serialization in 1980 and continued for two years. Published in book form in 1983, it was an instant best seller and created something of a controversy when it was awarded Japan's science-fiction Grand Prix of 1983 for best s-f novel, the first time the prize ever went to a comics work.

This led Otomo to undertake an even more ambitious project, **Akira**, which would be some 1800 pages long. Otomo launched **Akira** in **Young Magazine** published by **Kodansha Ltd.** This tradition-breaking but struggling bi-weekly was aimed at a high school-college student audience whom Otomo felt was most in tune with the new directions he hoped to achieve. The rising circulation of **Young Magazine** with the appearance of **Akira** proved him correct. Today, there are over a million readers.

In book format **Akira** was just as much a phenomenon. The first volume was a best seller the moment it appeared in stores. The subsequent three volumes have been received with equal enthusiasm. With the fifth and final volume (planned for Spring of 1989), the saga will have a total of three million copies in print.

The latest success for Otomo and **Akira** was the feature length animated film. Opening in July, this new interpretation of the comics story for which Otomo acted as director, scenarist, designer and illustrator set attendance records for an animated movie in Japan.



KATSUHIRO OTOMO
writer/illustrator

YASUMITSU SUETAKE
chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

MAKOTO SHIOSAKI
SATOSHI TAKABATAKE
assistants to Mr. Otomo

HIROSHI HIRATA
designer, AKIRA calligraph

AKIRA SAITO
designer, Kodansha edition

Kodansha Ltd.

YOKO UMEZAWA
with **LINDA M. YORK**
translation

KOICHI YURI
editor, Kodansha edition

NORIYUKI OKAZAKI
YUKA ANDO
editorial coordinators

Epic Comics

JO DUFFY
english adaptation

STEVE OLIFF
colorist

MICHAEL HIGGINS
letterer

MIKE ROCKWITZ
HARRY CANDELARIO
MICHAEL HEISLER
production

MARK CHIARELLO
editorial assistant, Epic edition

ARCHIE GOODWIN
editor, Epic edition

A new force moves through the post World War III city of Neo-Tokyo. A force dubbed Number 41 by the secret government agency monitoring his moves. Once he was a teenage motorcycle gang member named Tetsuo, but that was before a strange accident put him in the hands of the government and left him...changed. A power is growing in Tetsuo. It allows him to kill with a glance. Violently. Explosively. But the power also corrupts. It turns him against his best friend, Kaneda. It drives him to seek out the murderous Clown cycle gang, bitter rivals of his former friends. Yet for all his emerging power, Tetsuo is still only a shadow of something greater to come, a sleeping giant not yet awakened...AKIRA.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S





AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

BOOK TWO